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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/804,460	03/19/2004	Chun Yuan	UNIV0220	7265

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EXAMINER

CLOW, LORI A

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
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1631

MAIL DATE	DELIVERY MODE
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11/01/2007

PAPER

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

Office Action Summary	Application No. 10/804,460	Applicant(s) YUAN ET AL.	
	Examiner Lori A. Clow, Ph.D.	Art Unit 1631	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 09 August 2007.
- 2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-44 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-44 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____ | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

DETAILED ACTION

Applicants' response, filed 9 August 2007, has been fully considered. Rejections and/or objections not reiterated from previous office actions are hereby withdrawn. The following rejections and/or objections are either reiterated or newly applied. They constitute the complete set presently being applied to the instant application.

Claims 1-44 are currently pending.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 101

35 U.S.C. 101 reads as follows:

Whoever invents or discovers any new and useful process, machine, manufacture, or composition of matter, or any new and useful improvement thereof, may obtain a patent therefor, subject to the conditions and requirements of this title.

Claims 1-44 remain rejected under 35 U.S.C. 101 because the claimed invention is directed to non-statutory subject matter, for the reasons set forth in the previous Office Action and re-iterated below.

Claims 1, 22, 26, and 32 are drawn to a method for estimating a thickness of a wall of a lumen from an image of a lumen comprising steps that do not include a physical transformation of matter. As emphasized by the New Interim Guidelines the claims will be evaluated for providing a practical application. A practical application is claimed if the claimed invention physically transforms an article or physical object to a different state or thing, or if the claimed invention otherwise produces a concrete, tangible, and useful result. In the instant case, a physical transformation of matter is not provided, as the instant claims merely encompass non-physical (i.e. *in-silico*) method steps which do not result in a physical transformation of matter.

Therefore, the claims must be evaluated for providing a practical application that produces a concrete, tangible and useful result. The focus is not on the steps taken to achieve a particular result, but rather the final result achieved by the claimed invention. A claim may be statutory where it recites a result that is concrete (i.e. reproducible), tangible (i.e. communicated to a user), and useful (i.e. a specific and substantial). In the instant case, the do not recite a tangible result such that it is useful to one skilled in the art. For these reasons, the instant claims are not statutory.

Claims 21, 35, and 38 are drawn to a memory medium and a system for estimating a thickness of a wall of a lumen from an image of a lumen. In the instant claims the “medium” or “system”, constitute nonfunctional descriptive material, as no requisite functionality is present to satisfy the practical application requirement. Merely claiming nonfunctional descriptive material, i.e. abstract ideas, stored in a computer-readable medium, in a computer, does not make the claims statutory. Further, data structures, as in a “program” are descriptive material, *per se* and are not statutory because they are not capable of causing a functional change in the computer. See, e.g., Warmerdam, 33 F.3d at 1361, 31 USPQ2d at 1760 (claim to a data structure *per se* held nonstatutory). Computer programs are viewed as computer listings, *per se*, i.e., the description or expression of the programs, are not physical things. They are neither computer components nor statutory processes, as they are not “acts” being performed. Such claimed computer programs do not define any structural and functional interrelationships between the computer program and the other claimed elements of a computer that permit that computer program’s functionality to be realized.

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Response to Applicant's Arguments

Applicant argues that the "Examiner indicated that this rejection could be overcome by amending the claims to recite a result that is 'stored' or 'outputted'". This is not persuasive.

It was noted in the previous rejection that this rejection could be overcome by amending the claims to recite that a result of the method is "**displayed**" or "**outputted**" (e.g. **output to a user, a display, a memory, or another computer**), or by amending the claims to include a step of a physical transformation of matter (e.g. assay), provided such is supported in the specification as originally filed. For an updated discussion of statutory considerations with regard to non- functional descriptive material and computer-related inventions, see the Guidelines for Patent Eligible Subject Matter in the MPEP 2106, Section IV.

Instant claims 1, 22, 36, 32, 35, and 38 have been amended to recite, "(f) having identified the minimum width and the maximum width, executing at least one step selected from the group consisting of the following steps:

- (i) storing indication of the minimum width and the maximum width for later use; and
- (ii) outputting indications of the minimum width and maximum width to a user.

Therefore, the claims, as amended, read on either "storing indications...for later use" or on "outputting indications...to a user".

If the claim merely "stores indications", the claim is not statutory, as storing could be performed within the confines of a computer and the results never made accessible to a user. Therefore, the claim does not meet the criteria of being concrete, **tangible**, and useful. If the claim only performed a step of "outputting...to a user", then the claim would meet the criteria

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and the rejection would be overcome. However, as the language is recited in the alternative, the claim remains non-statutory.

Conclusion

No claims are allowed.

THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL. Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the mailing date of this final action.

Inquiries

Papers related to this application may be submitted to Technical Center 1600 by facsimile transmission. Papers should be faxed to Technical Center 1600 via the PTO Fax Center. The faxing of such papers must conform with the notices published in the Official Gazette, 1096 OG 30 (November 15, 1988), 1156 OG 61 (November 16, 1993), and 1157 OG 94 (December 28, 1993) (See 37 CFR § 1.6(d)). The Central Fax Center Number is (571) 273-8300.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Lori A. Clow, Ph.D., whose telephone number is (571) 272-0715. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Friday from 10 am to 6:30 pm.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Marjorie Moran can be reached on (571) 272-0720.

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Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to (571) 272-0547.

Patent applicants with problems or questions regarding electronic images that can be viewed in the Patent Application Information Retrieval system (PAIR) can now contact the USPTO's Patent Electronic Business Center (Patent EBC) for assistance. Representatives are available to answer your questions daily from 6 am to midnight (EST). The toll free number is (866) 217-9197. When calling please have your application serial or patent number, the type of document you are having an image problem with, the number of pages and the specific nature of the problem. The Patent Electronic Business Center will notify applicants of the resolution of the problem within 5-7 business days. Applicants can also check PAIR to confirm that the problem has been corrected. The USPTO's Patent Electronic Business Center is a complete service center supporting all patent business on the Internet. The USPTO's PAIR system provides Internet-based access to patent application status and history information. It also enables applicants to view the scanned images of their own application file folder(s) as well as general patent information available to the public.

LORI A. CLOW, PH.D.
PRIMARY EXAMINER



October 26, 2007
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